

are in Hell, and when in such Case, tho' you would with ten thousand good wills give him your Hearts, yet he'll have none of them : but make you the Beacons of his terrible Indignation, and the monuments of his dreadful Vengeance. Therefore I say think on it in Time, before that dismal scene come upon you. Now in the

III. Place, I proceed to address my self to such among you, who have in Truth and reality given away your Hearts to the Lord. Now there are but two or three Things which I shall very shortly say unto you.

1. Then, have you given your Hearts to the Lord, and dare ye say that ye rue what ye have done, nay, sure I am, that so far it is from this, that ye will be ready to think and say, I have given my Heart to God, and had I ten thousand Hearts more, I would be content to give them all to him.

2. I say then to you, O blest the Lord that ever he gave you counsel to give your Hearts to himself ; for if ye had not plowed with his Heifer, ye had not this Day been in such happy Circumstances as these you now are in.

3. O beware of Suffering your Hearts any manner of way to wander from that God to whom you have given them. O ! now keep your Hearts with all Diligence for out of them are the Issues of Life.

4. Walk as such who have given your Hearts to the Lord ; beware of Sin, beware of returning to Egypt to any of your former rebellious Courses, or indulging your selves in any known Sin.

Lastly, O ! pity your graceless and rebellious Relations, Do all that lies within the Compass of your Power to induce them to lay down their rebellious Weapons and to yield and give up their Hearts to the Lord. O improve all the Interest that you have at a Throne of Grace on their behalf.

Now unto him that calleth you to give him your Hearts be Glory for ever, Amen.

4

A
COLLECTION
OF SOME
Causes of Fasts,
Appointed by the
GENERAL ASSEMBLIES
OF THE
Church of Scotland,
AND THEIR
COMMISSIONS,
Before the Year 1651.
FOR
Reformation in Religion.

Isa. 1. 13, 14. Gird your selves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, by all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat-offering and the drink-offering is withholden from the house of your God. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders, and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD.

Chap. 2. 15. Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, — Gather the people: — assemble the elders: gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: —

Ezek. 33. 6. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned: if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity: but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

Printed at the Desire of some Welwishers to the Covenant-
ed Work of Reformation, for the Information and Edifi-
cation of the present and succeeding Generations. 1728.

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COPIES OF THE REPORT

Church of St. Andrew

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Reader,

WHEN the Lord's People make Religion their Study, they will not shew their Dislike at any Thing that may forward them in their Work: And if Mens Hearts were duly impress'd with a Sense of Sin, there would not be much Need for setting the following Examples of Fasting and Humiliation before them.

That private Persons, Families, Congregations may, and should set Days apart for Fasting and Prayer, as their particular Circumstances require, we hope no judicious Person will deny; And why a National Church may not do the same, we are yet to learn. If there be National Sins abounding, and National Plagues felt and feared, as the sad Fruits of a Land's Departing from God; Why those to whom He has given a Command to sanctify a Fast, and to declare Sin and Duty, may not call a solemn Assembly for that Effect, by vertue of that Authority wherewith their Great Lord and Master hath clothed them, we must hear some better Reasons for the Negative than have been hitherto advanced, before we can heartily subscribe to it.

If Fasting be a Duty, and never more called for than at this Time, it will be a Query not easily answered, Why a Land lying under the lamentable Evidences of a displeased God, because of the abounding Wickedness whereof we stand undeniably guilty, hath not more of a Profession, at least, of publick Sorrow for the procuring Causes of his just Anger? One would be tempted to think, we were lying under something like the old sinful Engagement some Ministers were fettered with in the Time of Persecution, Not to preach the Gospel, unless the supreme Magistrate should put them to it.

To the Reader.

The Design, so far as I know, of Collecting and Re-printing these Causes of Fasts, is, only to let the present Age see what was the Practice of our worthy Fore-fathers, who had Religion and the Reformation thereof at Heart, and that they waited not for the Statesmen their Appointing Diets for Humiliation: For it is known, that when the Court and Courtiers have been for Feasting, the Lord's People have judged themselves called to Fasting, and that in the City of Edinburgh, in the very Face of the Court: Nor was this to be imputed to the Land's being more guilty in these Times than we are this Day, but rather that many, especially Ministers, had a better and clearer Sight of their Sins; They acknowledged them, they provided and practised Remedies some way suitable for preventing their further Growth; so far were they from stretching their Wits to deny or justify their Defections.

They would have judged it a Labouring to supplant the Liberties of the Church of Scotland, to have referr'd either the Times or the Causes of Fasting to the Court. When the Civil Powers would have arrogated to themselves a Power of Appointing Fasts and Thanksgivings, and Condescending on Causes and Diets, tho' they had a formidable and victorious Army in the Heart of the Kingdom; yet they could not frighten all the Church of Scotland into a Compliance with their Intrusion; But they weretested against, and condemn'd by sundry eminent Ministers in the Provinces of Perth and Fife; as is to be seen by their Testimony against them, re-printed Anno 1703. Pag. 20, 21. where they say, "As we
" do profess our Dissatisfaction that the Civil
" Powers should take upon themselves ordinarily
" to prescribe Humiliations and Thanksgivings,
" with the Causes and Diets thereof, to all the
" Mi-

To the Reader.

Ministers and Members of this Church, as being contrary to the well-warranted Privileges and constant Practice of the Church itself, and in its own Nature introductory to greater Encroachments, and putting into the Hands of the Civil Power the Modelling of the publick Worship of God, and Things most properly Ecclesiastick.

The General Assembly convened at Edinburgh 25 December 1565, Appointed Mr. John Knox and Mr. John Craig to set down the Form of Exercise which was to be used at the publick Fast, and to cause print it, which they did, and it is added to the Book of Common Order before the Psalms, where they speak in these Words; "The Power that we have to proclaim this Fasting, is not of Man, but of God, who, by the Mouth of his Prophet Ezekiel pronounceth this Sentence, If the Watchman see the Sword, or any Plague coming upon the Land, if he blow not the Trumpet, and plainly warn them to turn to God, and if the Sword come and take any of them away, the Wicked shall perish in his own Iniquity, but their Blood shall be required from the Hands of the Watchman. Now, so it is, that God of his Mercy hath raised up amongst us no Watchmen than One or Two, of whose Mouths we cannot deny, but we have heard fearful Threatnings of Plagues to follow upon this proud Contempt of all God's Graces."

As to the Time of Fasting, they say afterwards, "It is to be observed, that the Two Days before expressed, to wit, the second and third Sabbath of May, are not appointed for any Religion of Time, neither yet that those precise Days be observed every Year following; but because that shortly thereafter are the Estates of this Realm appointed to assemble in Parliament. Therefore

"the

“ the whole Assembly thought these Days for the
 “ present Necessity most meet, leaving in the Liberty
 “ of the Church what Time they will appoint to
 “ that Exercise in all Times to come.” — The
 Reason they give why they appointed Fasts upon
 the Sabbath-Days, is in these Words, “ The Sab-
 “ baths are not appointed of Superstition, neither yet
 “ to bring in any Schism within the Church, but
 “ because that upon the Sabbath the People (espe-
 “ cially that dwell in Country-Towns) may best
 “ attend upon Prayer, and the rest of the Exerci-
 “ ses that ought to be joined with publick Fasting.”

It would have been thought strange, in former
 Times of Reformation, for the Church of Scotland
 to have enjoyed a General Assembly every Year,
 and yet for Eighteen Years Space not to have enjoy-
 ned a National Fast, considering the manifold Sins
 the Land has been lying under all that Time, and
 what new Guilt we are daily contracting; and
 it would have been thought yet more strange, for
 the Church of Scotland to have so tamely observed
 Fast-days dated from the English-Popish-Kalendar,
 and that such as scrupled to comply with them should
 have been not only reproached, but threatned with
 Censure.

The solemn and avowed Breaking and Burning of
 our Covenants with God; The Burying them in Si-
 lence, except by Preaching and Writing of late a-
 gainst them; The persecuting and shedding the preci-
 ous and innocent Blood of the Lord's People for their
 Adhering to our covenanted Work of Reformation;
 The swearing Oaths, and subscribing Bonds, contra-
 dictory to, and inconsistent with these Covenants;
 And, as if once swearing were not Provocation e-
 nough, Magistrates and Counsellors in Burghs and
 elsewhere must repeat that Profanation of the Lord's
 Name.

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Name every Year by such Conscience-debauching Qualifications: The Establishing a boundless Toleration of all Errors, Heresies and Superstitions, thereby proclaiming a Liberty to carry on National Defections from the Reformation once happily attained unto: Errors taught and maintained, which strike at the very Foundation of our Christian Religion, whereby not a few, it is to be feared, of the Ministry are dreadfully corrupted; The Gospel-Liberty of the Lord's People to make Choice of their own Pastors is trampled on by Popish Patronages; A School of Profanity is publicly and avowedly set up and patronized in the principal City of the Kingdom; The Lord's Day openly profaned by Bleaching and Whitening of Cloth. If these, and many other crying Abominations committed of Old and of Late, and yet continued in, do not call for Fasting and Humiliation in a National Way, we know not what can.

Instead of taking Shame to our selves from a due Sight and Sense of our manifold Provocations, or a searching into our National Defections, by an Acknowledgment of Sins, or Engagement unto Duties, applicable to the present Times, according to the laudable Practice of this Church, Anno 1648. On the contrary, Persons are admitted to Offices in the Church, that are known Enemies to these Covenants. This is not agreeable to former Acts made against such as were either publick Enemies, or secret Reproachers of our Covenanted Work of Reformation. See the Acts of Assembly from 1638 to 1649.

The Righteous Lord has smitten many Places and Families through the Land with an AGUE, which has not been observed to be so Epidemical nor Mortal in the Memory of Man; many sudden Deaths have been heard of these Months past,

and who knows whose Turn shall come next? Some Places of the Land have been terrified by an Earthquake, which is a Thing very rarely heard of in Scotland. Many have lost the Use of their Reason, and turned Mad; every Country-Man has observed the unseasonable Coldness of the Seed-time; every Merchant, almost, complains of the Decay of Trade; there is a general Cry in our Streets for want of Money; And it is not sad, that Ministers and Christians should not be observing these Indications of the Lord's Anger, and mourning over the procuring Causes of them? And that he should have it so say of all Ranks, Degrees and Parties of Men through the Land, I hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright, no Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one is ready to blame another, which is the wrong Way to Reform any.

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ pour out the Spirit of Grace and Supplication on all Ranks, that we may see our Way, and may yet know the Things that belong to our Peace, before they be hid from our Eyes; And, Reader, say thou, AMEN.

Besides the abovesaid Appointment, the Reader, for his further Satisfaction, may consult the following Appointments, viz. (1.) A Day for publick Thanksgiving appointed by the Ministers met at Edinburgh 1560, for their then Deliverance. *Knox Hist.* p. 258. (2.) The General Assembly at Edinburgh, March 1596, appointed an Humiliation for the Corruption and Enormities in the Ministry, *Cald. Hist.* p. 314. to 317. See Acts of Gen. Ass. 1638. p. 44. to 49. (3.) Dec. 14. 1596. A Fast-Day was observed, *Cald. Hist.* p. 358. (4.) Act ordaining all Presbyteries to keep a solemn Thanksgiving in all Parishes, for God's Blessing, and good Success of this Assembly. See unprinted Acts, Ass. 1638. (5.) Indication of a Fast by Assembly 1645, Sess. 14. *ibid.* (6.) Causes of a publick Fast, Assembly 1649, Sess. 42. *ibid.* Many more might be cited, if we had the publick Registers of the Church in those Times.

Erasm. p. 30. l. 11. *Prejudice* p. 33. l. 17. *unsearchable* p. 36. l. 1. r. of your p. 30. l. 28. r. prefixed.

Causes of FASTING, &c.

Assembly at *Edinburgh*, April 1. 1577.

Causes of a Fast appointed by the General Assembly to be kept through all the Kirks of the Realm; as inserted in Calderwood's History of the Church of Scotland, Page 79.

IN the End of this Assembly, a Fast was appointed to be kept universally throughout all the Kirks of the Realm, to begin the Lord's Day the 9th of *June*, and to continue till the next Lord's Day; and betwixt the two Days, the Exercise of Preaching to be used according to the accustomed Order: And that Intimation be made hereof by the Commissioners of Shires to the Ministers within their Bounds. The Causes of the Fast, are, (1.) Iniquity overflowing the whole Face of the Country. (2.) The perillous Storms and Persecution daily invading the Kirk in *France*, and elsewhere. (3.) For the Work of establishing perfect Order and Policy within this Kirk, which is presently in Hands, that it may have a good Success.

2 Causes of Fasting appointed

Assembly at *Edinburgh*, April 24. 1578. Sef. 7.
Causes of a Fast appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. See *Calderwood's History*, P. 81st.

A Fast was appointed to begin the 1st Lord's Day of *June*, and to continue till the next Lord's Day after, with the accustomed Exercise according to the Book of Fasts; and Intimation was to be made thereof to the King and his Council. The Causes were; Corruption in all Estates, Coldness in a great Part of the Professors, Increase of fearful Sins and Enormities, Domestick Sedition and Divisions, the bloody Conclusions of the cruel Councils of that *Roman* Beast, tending to the Extirpation of true Religion; and that God of his Mercy would bless the King's Highness and his Council, and put in his Highness's Heart, and the Hearts of the Estates and Parliament, not only to make and establish good Laws for the good Government of the Realm, but also establish such a Policy and Discipline in the Kirk, as is craved in the Word of God, and is conceived and penned already, to be presented to his Highness and Council.

Assembly at *Edinburgh*, February 6. 1588. Sef. 14.
Act for Fasts at the Beginning of Assemblies; as in Calderwood's History, P. 227.

THE Brethren have thought meet and ordained, That in Time coming, when it shall please God to convene the General Assembly, that the first

by the General Assembly. 3

first Day of the Assembly, in the Place and Town where they convene, a publick Fast and Humiliation be kept, as well by the Inhabitants, as by the Pastors convened; and that the ordinary Pastors teach Before-noon in the Morning, and Afternoon, the Time and Hour of the Exhortation made before the Assembly being kept, as of before, that it may please God to give his Blessing to the Convention, and good Success to their Travels. Because it was concluded that the next Assembly should be holden in *Edinburgh*, it was ordained that the Pastors there give Intimation of the Fast to the Congregation upon the Lord's Day before the said Assembly.

About the End of October the same Year, by the Authority of the same Assembly, a Solemn National Fast was kept, which continued three Sabbath-days, wherewith was joined the Celebration of the Lord's Supper: Thanks were given to God for that notable Delivery from the Invasion, attempted by the cruel Spaniards. Cald. ibid.

Assembly at *St. Andrews*, August 6. 1642. Ses. 13.
Act for remembring in publick Prayers, the Desires of the Assembly to the King and Parliament, and Indiction of a publick Fast.

THE General Assembly being desirous to promote the great Work of Unity in Religion, and Uniformity in Church-government in all their three Dominions, for which the Assembly hath humbly supplicate the King's Majesty, and remonstrate their Desires to the Parliament of *England*; lest they should be wanting in any Mean that may

Causes of Fasting appointed

further so glorious and so good a Work, do ordain, that not only the said Declaration to the Parliament, and Supplication to the King's Majesty, shall be accompanied with the earnest Petitions and Prayers of the whole Brethren, in private and publick, for the Lord's Blessing thereunto, according to the laudable Custom of our Predecessors, who, in the Year of God 1589, ordained, that the Brethren, in their private and publick Prayers, recommend unto God the Estate of the Afflicted Church of *England*: But having just Cause of Fear, that the Iniquities of the Land, which so much abound, may mar this so great a Work, do also ordain a Solemn Fast to be kept on the second Lord's Day of *September*, and the *Wednesday* following, throughout the whole Kingdom, for the Causes after specified;

I. Gross Ignorance, and all sort of Wickedness among the greater Part; Security, meer Formality, and Unfruitfulness among the Best; and Unthankfulness in all.

II. The Sword raging throughout all Christendom, but most barbarously in *Ireland*, and daily more threatned in *England*, through the lamentable Division betwixt the King and the Parliament there, tending to the Subversion of Religion and Peace in all the three Kingdoms.

III. That God may graciously bless the Supplication of the Assembly to the King's Majesty, and their Motion to the Parliament of *England*, for Unity in Religion, and Uniformity of Kirk-government, and all other Means which may serve for the promoting of so great a Work, and Advancement of the Kingdom of Christ every where.

IV. That God may powerfully overturn all wicked Plots and Designs of Antichrist and his Follow-

by the General Assembly.

5

ers ; and all divisive Motions against the Course of Reformation, and the so much longed for Union of the King and Parliament.

V. That God may bless the Harvest.

*Assembly at Edinburgh, June 4. 1644. Sess. 7.
Act for keeping the Fast by the Congregations in the Town where the Assembly holds.*

THE Assembly judge it most necessary and comely, seeing the first Day of the Meeting of the General Assemblies is, by the laudable Practice of this Kirk, a Day of Fasting and Humiliation, for craving the Lord's Blessing to that Meeting; That not only the Members of the Assembly, but that all the Congregations also of the Town where the Assembly holds, be so exercised: And that publick Worship be in all the Kirks-thereof, that Day, for that Effect.

*Assembly at Edinburgh, June 18. 1646. Sess. ult.
Act for a publick Fast before the next Assembly.*

THE Assembly having considered an Act of the Assembly 1644. Sess. ult. enjoining a publick Fast to be kept in all the Kirks of the City where the General Assembly holds, upon the first Day of the Meeting of the Assembly; And finding some Inconveniencies therein, Therefore, at this Time, until the Matter be further considered, appoints a publick Fast and Humiliation, for the Lord's Blessing to the Meeting of the next Assembly, to be universally observed in all the Congregations of this Kirk.

6 *Causes of Fasting appointed*

Kirk, upon the Sabbath next except one preceeding the said next Assembly; The Exercises for the Members of the Assembly, at their Meeting, being still observed, according to the ancient and laudable Practice of this Kirk, this Appointment notwithstanding.

At Edinburgh, June 4. 1643.

A Solemn Fast and Humiliation, appointed by the Commissioners of the General Assembly to be kept through the whole Kingdom, upon the last Sabbath of February, and the next Thursday thereafter.

WHereas, by the late General Assembly, Power is committed to us to consider and perform what we find necessary, by all lawful and Ecclesiastick Ways, for the Furtherance of the Union in Religion, and Unity in Kirk-government; for Continuance of our own Peace at Home, and of the common Peace betwixt the Kingdoms: We find it necessary, that there shall be a solemn Fast and Humiliation kept in all the Kirks of this Kingdom, on the last Sabbath of *February*, and the *Thursday* next thereafter, for the Causes and Motives following;

I. Altho' within these few Years we renewed the Covenant, and vowed solemnly to stand to the former Reformation of Religion, and to reform our selves and Families; we have, notwithstanding, fallen from the Zeal and Fervency of our Profession at that Time; Persons of all Ranks and Callings are grown lukewarm, and are content with a meer Formality

by the Commission of Assembly. 7

mality and Shew of Godliness, without the inward Power; yea, the most Part are profane, so that Blasphemy, Profanation of the Sabbath, Fornication, Adultery, Drunkenness, and other Vices, abound as much as before in the Time of Corruption; Family-worship, mutual Edification, and stirring up one of another, by Information, Admonition, Consolation, Rebuke, much neglected; and Ministers negligent in urging the same: All which are so much the more hainous, because of our Unthankfulness after so great Mercies, and Breach of Covenant.

II. The Danger of this Kirk and Kingdom, arising partly from within, by the Insolency of Papists in these troublesom Times, the divisive Motions of the Malignant Party, and Creeping in of the Errors of Separation; and partly from without, from the Popish Armies and Prelatical Party in *England* and *Ireland*, which aim undoubtedly at the Disturbance of our Peace, and Overthrow of the Work of Reformation: The Consideration whereof should move us to pray to God, to direct us in all lawful Means which may serve for Unity among our selves, that we may be the more strengthened against the common Enemies.

III. In respect of the Fellow-feeling which we ought to have with the Members of Christ's Body far and near, we have Cause to lament the long lasting Troubles of the Kirks of God abroad, in *Germany* and elsewhere; and specially the present Combustions in *England*, and almost utter Desolation in *Ireland*.

IV. That the Lord may bless all lawful Means to be used for preserving the Union and Peace betwixt the two Kingdoms, and procuring the Unity of Religion, and Uniformity of Worship and Kirk-govern-

3 Causes of Fasting appointed, &c.

vernment within his Majesty's Dominions: Especially, that God would grant a good Success to the Treaty and Travels of the Commissioners for the Conservation of Peace, and a gracious Acceptance to the Supplications unto his Majesty from the Lords of Council, and the Commissioners both of Parliament and of the General Assembly.

V. Because the unhappy Division betwixt the King and the Parliament of *England*, is a great Impediment to the Work of Reformation, and to the Settling of a firm Peace in his Majesty's Dominions; It is our Duty to recommend earnestly to the Lord, that the Differences may be composed in such a Way, as may most conduce to advance the so much wished for Unity of Religion, and Uniformity of Worship and Kirk-government.

VI. Finally, That the Lord would discover and disappoint all the Conspiracies, Counsels, and Machinations, which tend to the Execution of the the bloody Decrees of *Trent*, the Fountain whence hath issued all the Troubles and Persecutions to the Reformed Kirks; and that he would quickly destroy the Man of Sin.

At *Edinburgh*, October 6th, 1648.

A Solemn Acknowledgment of publick Sins and Breaches of the Covenant; and a solemn Engagement to all the Duties contained therein, namely, those which do in a more special Way relate to the Dangers of these Times.

This Acknowledgment was drawn up by the Commissioners of the General Assembly, and appointed

Acknowledgment of Sins.

ted by them to be read the second Sabbath of December 1648, at the Intimation of the two solemn Fasts, appointed by them to be kept throughout the whole Kingdom, upon the next Thursday and Sabbath thereafter, at the Renewing of the Solemn League and Covenant.

WE Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burgesles, Ministers of the Gospel, and Commons of all Sorts within this Kingdom, by the good Hand of God upon us, taking into serious Consideration the many sad Afflictions and deep Distresses where-with we have been exercised for a long Time past; and that the Land, after it hath been sore wasted with the Sword and the Pestilence, and threatened with Famine; and that Shame and Contempt have been poured out from the Lord against many Thousands of our Nation, who did, in a sinful Way, make War upon the Kingdom of *England*, contrary to the Testimony of his Servants, and Desires of his People; and that the Remnants of that Army, returning to this Land, have spoiled and oppressed many of our Brethren; and that the malignant Party is still numerous, and retaining their former Principles, wait for an Opportunity to raise a new and dangerous War, not only unto the rending of the Bowels of this Kingdom, but unto the dividing of us from *England*, and overturning of the Work of God in all the three Kingdoms: And considering also, that a Cloud of Calamities doth still hang over our Heads, and threaten us with sad Things to come; we cannot but look upon these Things as from the Lord, who is righteous in all his Ways, feeding us with the Bread of Tears, and making us to drink the Waters of Affliction, until we be taught to know how evil and bitter a Thing it is

Acknowledgment of Sins.

to depart away from him, by breaking the Oath and Covenant which we have made with him; and that we may be humbled before him, by confessing our Sin, and forsaking the Evil of our Way.

Therefore, being pressed with so great Necessities and Straits, and warranted by the Word of God, and having the Example of God's People of old, who, in the Time of their Troubles, and when they were to seek Delivery and a right Way for themselves, that the Lord might be with them, to prosper them, and did humble themselves before him, and make a free and particular Confession of the Sins of their Princes, their Rulers, their Captains, their Priests and their People; and did engage themselves to do no more so, but to reform their Ways, and bested fast in his Covenant: And remembering the Practice of our Predecessors in the Year 1396, wherein the General Assembly, and all the Kirk-Judicatories, with the Concurrence of many of the Nobility, Gentry and Burgessees, did, with many Tears, acknowledge before God the Breach of the National Covenant, and engaged themselves to a Reformation, even as our Predecessors and theirs had before done in the General Assembly and Convention of Estates in the Year 1567. And perceiving that this Duty, when gone about out of Conscience and in Sincerity, hath always been attended with a Reviving out of Troubles, and with a Blessing and Success from Heaven; we do humbly and sincerely, as in his Sight, who is the Searcher of Hearts, acknowledge the many Sins and great Transgressions of the Land; we have done wickedly, our Kings, our Princes, our Nobles, our Judges, our Officers, our Teachers, and our People. Albeit the Lord hath long and clearly spoken unto us, we have not hearkned to his Voice; Albeit he hath

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And Engagement to Duties. II

followed us with tender Mercies, we have not been
allured to wait upon him, and walk in his Way;
and tho' he hath stricken us, yet we have not grie-
ved; nay, tho' he hath consumed us, we have re-
fused to receive Correction; we have not remem-
bered to render unto the Lord according to his Good-
ness, and according to our own Vows and Promises,
but have gone away backward, by a continued
Course of Backsliding, and have broken all the Ar-
ticles of that Solemn League and Covenant, which
we swore before God, Angels and Men.

Albeit there be in the Land many of all Ranks,
who be for a Testimony unto the Truth, and for a
Name of Joy and Praise unto the Lord, by living
godly, studying to keep their Garments pure, and
being stedfast in the Covenant and Cause of God;
yet we have Reason to acknowledge, that most of
us have not endeavoured, with that Reality, Sincere-
ty and Constancy that did become us, to preserve
the Work of Reformation in the Kirk of *Scotland*;
Many have satisfied themselves with the Purity of
the Ordinances, neglecting the Power thereof; yea,
some have turned aside to crooked Ways, destruc-
tive to both. The prophane, loose and insolent Car-
riage of many in our Armies, who went to the As-
sistance of our Brethren in *England*, and the Tam-
erings and unstraight Dealing of some of our Com-
missioners and others of our Nation in *London*,
the Isle of *Wight*, and other Places of that King-
dom, have proved great Lets to the Work of Refor-
mation, and settling of Kirk-Government there,
whereby Error and Schism in that Land have been
increased, and Sectaries hardened in their Way. We
have been so far from endeavouring the Exirpation
of Prophanenels, and what is contrary to the Power
of Godliness, that Prophanity hath been much win-
cked

ked at, and prophane Persons much countenanced, and many Times employed, until Iniquity and Ungodliness hath gone over the Face of the Land as a Flood: Nay, sufficient Care hath not been had to separate betwixt the Precious and the Vile, by debarring from the Sacrament all ignorant and scandalous Persons, according to the Ordinances of this Kirk.

Neither have the Privileges of the Parliaments and Liberties of the Subject been duly tendered, but some amongst our selves have laboured to put into the Hands of our King, an arbitrary and unlimited Power, destructive to both; and many of us have been accessory of late to those Means and Ways, whereby the Freedom and Privileges of Parliaments have been encroached upon, and the Subjects oppressed in their Consciences, Persons and Estates: Neither hath it been our Care to avoid these Things which might harden the King in his evil Way; but, upon the contrary, he hath not only been permitted, but many of us have been instrumental to make him exercise his Power in many Things tending to the Prejudice of Religion and of the Covenant, and of the Peace and Safety of these Kingdoms; which is so far from the right Way of preserving his Majesty's Person and Authority, that it cannot but provoke the Lord against him, unto the Hazard of both: Nay, under a Pretence of relieving and doing for the King, whilst he refuses to do what was necessary for the House of God, some have ransacked and violated most of all the Articles of the Covenant.

Our own Consciences within, and God's Judgments upon us without, do convince us of the manifold wilful renewed Breaches of that Article, which concerneth the Discovery & Punishment of Malignants whose Crimes have not only been connived at, but

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And Engagement to Duties.

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dispensed with and pardoned, and themselves received into intimate Fellowship with our selves, and entrusted with our Counsels, admitted into our Parliaments, and put in Places of Power and Authority, for managing the publick Affairs of the Kingdom; whereby, in God's Justice, they got at last into their Hands, the whole Power and Strength of the Kingdom, both in Judicatories and Armies, and did imploy the same unto the enacting and prosecuting an unlawful Engagement in War against the Kingdom of England, notwithstanding of the Dissent of many considerable Members of Parliament, who had given constant Proof of their Integrity in the Cause, from the Beginning; of many faithful Testimonies and free Warnings of the Servants of God; of the Supplications of many Synods, Presbyteries and Shires; and of the Declarations of the General Assembly and their Commissioners to the contrary. Which Engagement, as it hath been the Cause of much Sin, so also of much Misery and Calamity unto this Land, and holds forth to us the Grievousness of our Sin of complying with Malignants, in the Greatness of our Judgment, that we may be taught never to split again upon the same Rock, upon which the Lord hath set so remarkable a Beacon. And after all that is come to pass unto us because of this our Trespasse, and after that Grace hath been shewed unto us from the Lord our God, by breaking these Mens Yoke from off our Necks, and putting us again into a Capacity to act for the Good of Religion, our own Safety, and the Peace and Safety of this Kingdom; Should we again break his Commandment and Covenant, by joining once more with the People of those Abominations, and taking into our Bosom those Serpents, which had formerly stung us almost unto Death: This, as it would

would argue great Madriels and Folly upon our Part, so no doubt, if it be not avoided, will provoke the Lord against us, to consume us, until there be no Remnant nor Escaping in the Land.

And, albeit the Peace and Union betwixt the Kingdoms be a great Blessing of God unto both, and a Bond which we are obliged to preserve unviolated, and to endeavour that Justice may be done upon the Opposers thereof: Yet some in this Land, who have come under the Bond of the Covenant, have made it their great Study how to dissolve this Union, and few or no Endeavours have been used by any of us for punishing of such.

We have suffered many of our Brethren in several Parts of the Land to be oppressed of the common Enemy, without Compassion or Relief: There hath been great Murmuring and Repining because of Expence of Means and Pains in doing of our Duty; many, by Perswasion or Terror, have suffered themselves to be divided and withdrawn to make Desection to the contrary Part; many have turned off to a detestable Indifference and Neutrality in this Cause, which so much concerneth the Glory of God, and the Good of these Kingdoms; nay, many have made it their Study to walk so, as they might comply with all Times, and all the Revolutions thereof. It hath not been our Care to countenance, encourage, intrust and imploy such only, as from their Hearts did affect and mind God's Work; but the Hearts of such many Times have been discouraged, and their Hands weakened, their Sufferings neglected, and themselves slighted; and many, who were once open Enemies, and always secret Underminers, countenanced and employed; nay, even those who had been looked upon as Incendiaries, and

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upon whom the Lord hath set Marks of desperate Malignancy, Falshood and Deceit, were brought in, as fit to manage publick Affairs: Many have been the Lets and Impediments that have been cast in the Way to retard and obstruct the Lord's Work; and some have kept secret, what of themselves they were not able to suppress and overcome.

Besides these, and many other Breaches of the Articles of the Covenant in the Matter thereof, which it concerneth every one of us to search out and acknowledge before the Lord, as we would wish his Wrath to be turned away from us; so have many of us failed exceedingly in the Manner of our following and pursuing the Duties contained therein, not only seeking great Things for our selves, and mixing of private Interests and Ends concerning our selves and Friends and Followers, with those Things which concern the publick Good, but many Times preferring such to the Honour of God, and Good of his Cause, and retarding God's Work, until we might carry alongst with us our own Interests and Designs. It hath been our Way to trust in the Means, and to rely upon the Arm of Flesh for Success; albeit the Lord hath many Times made us meet with Disapointment therein, and stained the Pride of all our Glory, by blasting every carnal Confidence unto us: We have followed for the most Part the Counsels of Flesh and Blood, and walked more by the Rules of Policy than Piety, and have hearkned more unto Men than unto God.

Albeit we made solemn publick Profession before the World, of our unfeigned Desires to be humbled before the Lord for our own Sins; and the Sins of these Kingdoms, especially for our undervaluing of the inestimable Benefit of the Gospel; and that we have not laboured for the Power thereof, and received

ved Christ into our Hearts, and walked worthy of Him in our Lives, and of our true and unfeigned Purpose, Desire and Endeavour for our selves, and all others under our Power and Charge, both in publick and private, in all the Duties which we owe to God and Man, to amend our Lives, and each one to go before another in the Example of a real Reformation, that the Lord might turn away his Wrath and heavy Indignation, and establish these Kirks and Kingdoms in Truth and Peace; Yet we have refused to be reformed, and have walked proudly and obstinately against the Lord, not valuing his Gospel, nor submitting our selves unto the Obedience thereof; nor seeking after Christ, nor studying to honour Him in the Excellency of his Person, nor employ Him in the Vertue of his Offices; nor making Conscience of publick Ordinances, nor private nor secret Duties; nor studying to edify one another in Love. The Ignorance of God and of his Son Jesus Christ prevails exceedingly in the Land; The greatest Part of Masters of Families, amongst Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burgesses and Commons, neglect to seek God in their Families, and to endeavour the Reformation thereof: And albeit it hath been much pressed, yet few of our Nobles and great Ones ever to this Day could be perswaded to perform Family-Duties themselves, and in their own Persons; which makes so necessary and useful a Duty to be misregarded by others of inferior Rank. Nay, many of the Nobility, Gentry, and Burrows, who should have been Examples of Godliness and sober Walking unto others, have been Ringleaders of Excess and Rioting. Albeit we be the Lord's People engaged to Him in a solemn Way, yet to this Day we have not made it our Study that Judicatories and Armies should consist of, and Places of

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And Engagement to Duties. 17

Power and Trust be filled with Men of a blameless and Christian Conversation, and of known Integrity, and approven Fidelity, Affection and Zeal unto the Cause of God: But not only those who have been neutral and indifferent, but disaffected and malignant, and others who have been prophane and scandalous, have been intrusted; by which it hath come to pass, that Judicatories have been the Seats of Injustice and Iniquity, and many in our Armies by their Miscarriages have become our Plague, unto the great Prejudice of the Cause of God, the great Scandal of the Gospel, and the great Increase of Looseness and Prophanity throughout all the Land. It were impossible to reckon up all the Abominations that are in the Land; but the Blaspheming of the Name of God, Swearing by the Creatures, Profanation of the Lord's Day, Uncleanliness, Drunkenness, Excess and Rioting, Vanity of Apparel, Lying and Deceit, Railing and Cursing, Arbitrary and Uncontrouled Oppression, and Grinding of the Faces of the Poor, by Land-lords and others in Place and Power, are become ordinary and common Sins; and besides all these Things, there be many other Transgressions, whereof the Land wherein we live are guilty: All which we desire to acknowledge, and to be humbled for, that the World may bear Witness with us, that Righteousness belongeth unto God, and Shame and Confusion of Face unto us, as appears this Day.

And because it is needful for these who find Mercy, not only to confess, but also to forsake their Sin; therefore, that the Reality and Sincerity of our Repentance may appear, we do resolve and solemnly engage our selves before the Lord, carefully to avoid for the Time to come, all these Offences whereof we have now made solemn publick Acknowledg-

ment, and all the Snares and Temptations which attend thereunto: And to testify the Integrity of our Resolution herein, and that we may be the better enabled in the Power of the Lord's Strength to perform the same, we do again renew our Solemn League and Covenant, promising hereafter to make Conscience of all the Duties whereunto we are obliged, in all the Heads and Articles thereof; particularly of these which follow,

1st, Because Religion is of all Things the most excellent and precious, the advancing and promoting the Power thereof against all Ungodliness and Prophanity, the securing and preserving the Purity thereof against all Error, Heresy, and Schism, and namely *Independency, Anabaptism, Antinomianism, Arminianism, Socinianism, Familism, Libertinism, Scepticism, and Erastianism*, and the carrying on the Work of Uniformity, shall be studied and endeavoured by us, before all wordly Interests, whether concerning the King or our selves, or any other whatsoever. 2^{dly}, Because many have of late laboured to supplant the Liberties of the Kirk, we shall maintain and defend the Kirk of *Scotland*, in all her Liberties and Privileges, against all who shall oppose or undermine the same, or encroach thereupon, under any Pretext whatsoever. 3^{dly}, We shall vindicate and maintain the Liberties of the Subjects, in all these Things which concern their Consciences, Persons and Estates. 4^{thly}, We shall carefully maintain and defend the Union betwixt the Kingdoms, and avoid every Thing that may weaken the same, or involve us in any Measure of Accession unto the Guilt of those who have invaded the Kingdom of *England*. 5^{thly}, As we have been always loyal to our King, so we shall still endeavour

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And Engagement to Duties. 19

deavour to give unto God that which is God's, and to *Cesar* the Things which are *Cesar's*. 6thly, We shall be so far from conniving at, complying with, or countenancing of Malignancy, Injustice, Iniquity, Prophanity and Impiety, that we shall not only avoid, and discountenance thole Things, and cherish and encourage these Persons, who are zealous for the Cause of God, and walk according to the Gospel; but also shall take a more effectual Course than heretofore, in our respective Places and Callings, for punishing and suppressing these Evils; and faithfully endeavour, that the best and fittest Remedies may be applied for taking away the Causes thereof, and advancing the Knowledge of God, and Holiness and Righteousness in the Land. And therefore, in the last Place, as we shall earnestly pray unto God, that He would give us *able Men fearing God, Men of Truth and hating Covetousness*, to judge and bear Charge among his Pople; so we shall, according to our Places and Callings, endeavour, that Judicatories, and all Places of Power and Trust, both in Kirk and State, may consist of, and be filled with such Men as are of known good Affection to the Cause of God, and of a blameless and Christian Conversation.

And because there be many, who heretofore have not made Conscience of the Oath of God, but some through Fear, others by Perswasion, and upon base Ends and humane Interests, have entred thereinto, who have afterwards discovered themselves to have dealt deceitfully with the Lord, in swearing falsely by his Name; therefore we, who do now renew our Covenant, in Reference to these Duties, and all other Duties contained therein, do, in the Sight of Him who is the Searcher of Hearts, solemnly profess, that it is not upon any politick Advantage or pri-

Acknowledgment of Sins,

vate Interest or By-end, or because of any Terror or Perswasion from Men, or hypocritically and deceitfully, that we do again take upon us the Oath of God, but honestly and sincerely, and from the Sense of our Duty; and that therefore, denying our selves and our own Things, and laying aside all Self-interest and Ends, We shall above all Things seek the Honour of God, the Good of his Cause, and the Wealth of his People; and that, forsaking the Counsels of Flesh and Blood, and not leaning upon carnal Confidences, we shall depend upon the Lord, walk by the Rule of his Word, and hearken to the Voice of his Servants: In all which, professing our own Weakness, we do earnestly pray to God, who is the Father of Mercies thro' his Son Jesus Christ, to be merciful unto us, and to enable us by the Power of his Might, that we may do our Duty, unto the Praise of his Grace in the Churches. *Amen.*

The Occasion of this *Acknowledgment* and *Engagement* was this;

THE Commission of the General Assembly 1648. considering the many Breaches of the Solemn League and Covenant (and particularly by the Engagement in War that Year against *England*) the Slackness of many in following the Duties therein, and that many (being under Age when it was first sworn) had not been received into the same, did, by their Act October 6. ordain it to be renewed, with this *solemn Acknowledgment of Sins* and Breaches, and *Engagement to Duties*; and, to that Effect, appointed two solemn Fasts to be kept in all the Congregations of the Land, for the Causes contained in the *Acknowledgment of Sins*; and that

And Engagement to Duties. 21

Intimation thereof should be made to the People upon the Sabbath before; and that the *Covenant*, together with the former *Acknowledgment of Sins*, and *Engagement to Duties*, should be read publicly to the People upon the Day of the Intimation, and the last Fast-day, when the *Covenant* was to be sworn. This Resolution of the *Commission*, upon the same Grounds, was unanimously approved by the *Committee of Estates* then sitting, and by their Act *October 14.* ordained to be put in Execution, in all Things according to the Directions of the *Commission*: And accordingly, in the Month of *December*, it was for the second Time sworn in all the Congregations of the Kingdom, upon the same Day, (except where Vacancy, or the Ministers being under Scandal or Process, did occasion a Delay till another Day, that the Place was supplied by another Minister) with great Solemnity, and such Mixture of Joy and Sorrow, as became People, entering in *Covenant* with the Lord, and was thereafter subscribed by all the Swearers. Afterward, the *Parliament* convening, in *January 1649.* by their very first Act except the Election of their President, upon the same Grounds, resolved to keep a Fast by themselves, for the Causes contained in the *Acknowledgment*, and to renew the *Covenant* according to the Order of the *Commission*, which was also most solemnly done. And last of all, the General Assembly 1649. by their Act *July 7.* did unanimously and expressly ratify the Proceedings of the *Commission*, as to the *Acknowledgment of Sins*, *Engagement to Duties*, the *Fasts*, and *Renewing of the Covenant*, by swearing and subscribing thereof. Hence, as the *Covenant* it self, so the *solemn Acknowledgment of Sins*, and *Engagements to Duties*, became National, authorized by the supreme Judicatures

22 *Causes of Fasting drawn up*
captures of Church and State, and are still obliging
by Oath. *Oh! That the Lord had kept these*
Things in the Imagination of the Thought of our
Hearts for ever.

The great Sin, and chief Guiltiness of
Scotland, in the Contempt of the Gos-
pel, as it was Branched out in Parti-
culars by the Commission of the Gene-
ral Assembly in the Year 1650.

Reprinted at the Desire of the Synod of Lothian
and Tweeddale, for the Fast appointed by them in
the Year 1654.

First, Sins relating to the Gospel-Ordi-
nances.

FIRST, To the Word. Neglecting to come
and attend on the Preaching of the Word,
both on the Lord's Day, and on Week-Days,
in these Places where such Exercises are on these
Days.

2. Not coming to the Preaching of the Word,
for the right End, viz. to find Communion with
Christ, and a Taste of his Goodness and Excellency,
and to be built up in the most Holy Faith; But
either out of Custom, or to eschew Censures, or
to satisfy and hold off the Challenges of a natural
Conscience, or some By-respect: And not preparing
the Heart before-hand in Secret, to come with
godly Fear and Reverence, Humility, spiritual
Hungering and Thirsting after the Kingdom of God
and the Righteousness thereof, and desiring as new

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born Babes the sincere Milk of the Word, to grow thereby.

3. That when the People are at the Preaching of the Word, besides great Carelessness, Overlinefs, Sleeping, Wandring of the Heart, and Inadvertency to what is Preached; the Word is not heard as an Ordinance and Mean appointed of God to work upon, and carry in Grace and Comfort unto the Heart, but is only regarded as other Discourses proceeding from Mens Ability and Parts, and is accordingly esteemed by the most Part, or at most is only made Use of, as a Mean of informing the Judgment.

4. That, in the Preaching of the Word, neither do Ministers speak the same as the Oracles of God, not remembring themselves to be the Ambassadors of Christ, speaking in God's stead: Nor do the People present themselves in so immediate a Way before God himself, as to receive the Word, not as the Word of Man, but as the true Word of God; whence it cometh to pass, that there is little Trembling at the Word, and so little Rejoicing in it.

5. That People, in the hearing of the Word, content themselves with Man's Teaching, and do not, in the Conviction of their own Blindness, and utter Inability of themselves to perceive the Things of the Spirit, and of the Insufficiency of the outward Means without God's immediate Work there-with upon the Heart, imploy himself to teach them inwardly by his Spirit, joining with the outward Means, according to the Promise of the Covenant, *They shall be all taught of God.* Whence it cometh to pass, that there is so much Preaching, and so little Profiting; so much Learning, and so little Speed-coming in the Knowledge of God.

6. The

24. *Causes of Fasting drawn up*

6. The not mixing of the Word preached with Faith, while as in the hearing thereof, even these who seem to give most Heed thereunto, do for the most part rather imploy the Judgment to consider and judge of the Pertinency, Coherence, the Way of uttering of the Doctrine delivered; or in a meer speculative Way to apprehend the Matter and Truth of what is spoken, than they do labour with the Heart to close with, embrace and apply to themselves the Truth preached.

7. No Care to lay up and hide the Words of Christ in the Heart, to remember the same for Use-making: But letting them slip and run thorow; which the Apostle accounteth a Neglecting of the great Salvation of God, (*Heb. 2. 1, 3.*) Nor imploying the Spirit to bring the Word that hath been heard, but forgotten, to Remembrance: Not making Conscience to confer on the Word preached, and to whet it one upon another: Not taking Pains, nor delighting in it in private, to read, and meditate on it.

II. In Relation to the Sacraments. And first in general and common: Not making Use of them as Seals of the Covenant of Grace, and Promises thereof made to us in Christ; but laying all the Weight of Confidence upon themselves, and being content with the Deed done; which was the ordinary Sin of the Jews, in the Use of Circumcision, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Law, so often charged upon them in Scripture. Then particularly,

In Baptism. 1. In Parents bringing their Children thereunto, either out of meer Fashion and Custom, as meerly to have a Difference put between them and unchristened People, or in effect as unto a meer Ceremony: And not from any Sense that they are unclean from Unclean, born Dead in Sins,

and

By the Commission of Assembly. 25

and Children of Wrath of themselves, defiled with Original Guilt and Corruption; nor from a Desire that they may be spiritually Regenerated, Incorporated unto Christ, to be made Partakers of the Vertue of his Death and Resurrection, to be washed from their Filthiness in the Blood of Christ, and to get Interest in the Covenant of Grace, and Promises thereof, sealed up unto them.

2. Not setting themselves, in the Administration of this Sacrament, to consider and prize the free Love and Grace of God, which hath prevented us, and our Seed, in providing such a Fountain for Sin and Uncleaness in Christ, making such a Covenant with us, so well ordered in all Things, and sure, preventing us and our Seed with the Seal thereof; nor to apply the Covenant and the Promises thereof for our selves and our Seed, and this Sacrament as the Seal of the same.

3. The great and evident Slighting of the Administration of the Sacrament, while as few in the Congregation joineth therein, either for their own Edification, or to hold up the Baptized to God, that he might bless his own Ordinance to them, and receive them in amongst his Children in Christ: And many withdraw themselves from the Administration thereof, as if it did not concern them, and only the Minister and Precentor were to be Actors in it.

4. Parents not making Conscience, to make known unto their Children, when they come to Years of Capacity, their Baptism, the Ends and Use thereof, and the Obligation thereby lieth upon them, as consecrated to Christ.

5. The not making Use of this Sacrament all along the Course of our Life, for renewing and strengthening our Comfort in the Faith and Assurance

26 *Causes of Fasting drawn up*

ance of our Regeneration and Adoption; and of our Interest in God, as our God and Father in Christ; and for strengthening, thro' Christ, our Resolutions and Endeavours of Mortification, and Newness of Life: Which is a great Despising of this Ordinance.

2dly, In the Lord's Supper; 1. The great Prophanation thereof, by the coming and admitting thereunto, of many gross Ignorants, who cannot discern the Lord's Body, nor know how to examine themselves: Many prophane Ones, godless Livers, without the Worship of God in private; and into many Places, all Sorts of Persons promiscuously, without making a Difference between the Precious and the Vile, whereby the Blood of Christ is much prophaned (altho' the Constitutions of our Kirk, were they well observed, do sufficiently guard against these Evils) which, no doubt, is one of the main Sins, for which God hath been provoked to suffer so much of our Blood to be shed. See 1 Cor.

11. 30.

2. The little or no Care or Pains that is taken for Preparation to so high and holy an Ordinance, wherein we are called to the nearest and most familiar Communion with Christ, that is here upon Earth: Most part contenting themselves, giving their Presence at a Preparation-Sermon, many not making Conscience of so much as this. Very few separating themselves, as is needful, to examine themselves; That, being sensible of their Guiltiness, spiritual Inlacks, &c. they might come with humble, broken, and contrite Spirits, with spiritual Hunger and Thirst for Christ Crucified, and sincere Purposes of Heart to forsake their former sinful Courses, and to renew their Covenant with God, in the Strength of Christ's Grace.

3. The

By the Commission of Assembly. 27

3. The great and lamentable Blackishness of the most Part, in the Participation of this Ordinance; who, may be, have some Kind of Amazement at the Solemnities thereof; but do noways therein exercise themselves in remembering the Lord's Death till he come again; to apply the same to themselves, for Peace with God, and mortifying the Body of Sin, for working deep Repentance, and Gospel-sorrow for Sin, and getting the Love of Christ more kindled in them, and their Hearts enlarged with greater Thankfulness toward him, who loved us, and gave himself for us. And on the other Hand, the great heartless sinful Dejection of many sensible Souls, who at no Time are readier to be plunged in legal Heaviness, and feeding as it were on Gall and Worm-wood, than at this Ordinance, wherein they ought to be most rejoicing through Faith on the Propitiation in the Death of Christ, so familiarly set forth therein to them.

4. That the Time and Occasion of this Sacrament, is used by the most Part, only for some outward Restraint of grosser Sins, for a Day or two before and after; but all such Goodness being as a Morning-Cloud, no Constancy nor real Reformation, but presently turning to wonted, natural, worldly, and carnal Courses; notwithstanding renewed Remembering of the Death of Christ, and Profession of renewing Covenants with God.

III. In Relation to the Ordinance of Discipline.

1. Much Partiality in the Administration thereof, with Respect of Persons, and according to Affection; which appeareth in that, while as Offences and Scandals in meaner Persons are taken notice of, challenged and censured; there is not the like Christian Freedom, Faithfulness and Zeal used toward such as

38 **Causes of Fasting drawn up**
are more eminent for Weak, Place or Dignity in
the World.

2. Want of a Spirit of Meekness, sometimes in
the Administration thereof; whereby Men, if God
peradventure would give them Repentance, might
be recovered out of the Snarcs of Satan. And, on
the other Hand, want of Zeal often Times, to
save others with Fear, plucking them out of the
Fire.

3. Much Vilifying, Contemning of the Censures
and Exercise of Discipline; yea, Hating thereof,
and the Officers of the Kirk for it.

4. Not making Use of it as a spiritual Medicine
and Means of Salvation, but as a meer Punishment;
which as it is in it self a Mis-apprehension and Abuse
of this Ordinance, so is (no doubt) the Cause of
so much Impatience and Indignation against it in
People, and of so much Inequality and Mixture of
selfish Affection in the Administration thereof.

5. The great Formality that is every where in the
Use thereof, while as, so be it that Persons under
Censure continue out their set Time and Days of
Censure, little Care or Respect is had of the Effects
for which it was instituted, to wit, Humiliation
of Heart, and godly Sorrow, bringing forth Repen-
tance not to be repeated of; which maketh the
Administration thereof to look too like the Way
of Popish Penance.

IV. In Relation to Prayer: 1. Great Neglect
thereof by most Part of Persons and Families through-
out the Land, in Private and Secret.

a. Many, more eminent Persons in the World,
accounting the Performance thereof in their Fami-
lies (although this be incumbent to them by their
Place and Station) a Disparagement; and therefore

By the Commission of Assembly. 29

putting it over upon others, as a Service below them.

3. In the publick Prayers of the Kirk, Peoples lying by from joining therein all along with their Spirits, which should be striving together with the Minister: Either muttering Words of their own, or taking Liberty to themselves to be idle in the Work, and reaving in their Thoughts, as if the Minister only were to be an Actor in that Service.

4. Not using this Ordinance as a Mean of Communion with God, and of obtaining Blessings from him: But using it meerly as a Duty, and many as a Matter of meer Task. Whereof many may be convinced by this, that they do not make Conscience, nor set themselves to observe what cometh of their Prayers, how they are taken off their Hand, what speed they have come, and what Answer they get.

5. The little Care that is had either by Ministers or others to pray in the Spirit, or to imploy the Spirit of Grace and Supplication for this Service: The most Part, in their Performances thereof, too evidently acting meerly their own Memory, Invention, Wit, &c. and that oftentimes with apparent Affectation.

V. Relating more immediately to Christ himself, and the free Grace of God in him, which is the Matter and Object of the Gospel: As,

I. Gross Ignorance in the most Part, and great shortcoming of the best, in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, his Person, Offices, his Blessings and Benefits, of the Covenant of Grace established in him, and the Way of making Use of Christ and the Covenant of Grace.

a. Undervaluing and misprising of Christ, Communion with him, and his spiritual Graces and Blessings; Which appears most evidently, by the great

Nc.

30 *Causes of Fastings drawn up*

Neglect of the Use of these Means and Exercises, publick, private and secret, wherein He offereth himself to be sought and found: The great Wearying of them, greater Willingness and Readiness to bestow Time and Pains upon Things worldly, even Vanity and Trifles, than on these: Preferring the Interests of Creatures to the Interests of Christ, and not giving him the Preheminence above all: By the Readiness which appears in People, in Times of Trial, to comply with sinful Courses, to the Prejudice of Christ's Cause, and the hazarding of their own Peace with God, for maintaining their Ease, temporary Safety and worldly Commodities, rather than to deny themselves, take up their Cross and follow him.

3. Not receiving of Christ, nor making Use of him as he is held forth in the Gospel, in his Fulness of Grace; nor living by Faith in him: More especially in not receiving and making Use of his free Grace and imputed Righteousness for Justification, Acceptation before God, and for Peace of Conscience: While as most Part securely rest on meer outward Church-privileges: Many confide in their own moral Honesty, Performances and Duties; so going about to establish their own Righteousness, and following Duties this Way to make their Peace and Reconciliation thereby with God. And even the best Professors do not so purely and intirely rest on his Righteousness as the Gospel requireth: As will appear by these Things, amongst many others; Heartless Fears, Misbelief, scarring to apply Christ, and to make Use of the Promises; not rejoicing in Christ and his Propitiation with Humility, when there is a Discovery, Challenges and Apprehensions of Want, Shortcoming and Failing of Duties; which, in Effect, is in a Degree, and in Part an esta-

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blushing our own Righteousness, and not submitting to the Righteousness of God. Not making Use of Christ, for Sanctification, according to the Promises of the Covenant; and not acting in a Way of Dependence on him, in all the Performances of our common Christian Calling, and of particular lawful Vocations, for Direction, Quickning, Strength to mortify Corruptions, to every Duty, and to carry us through against Discouragements and Tentations: But acting only, or most Part, by the Strength of our own Wits, Abilities, and Pains.

In not making Use of the Mediation and Intercession of Christ, in approaching to the Throne of Grace, in Prayers, Supplications, and Thanksgivings (while as many do neglect Prayer altogether) albeit they have some Course of Performance of this Duty, yet know not what it is to put their Prayers up to God through the Mediator, though they may perhaps name his Name, but do as that *Uziah*, who would offer Incense himself, neglecting the High Priest: And even Believers themselves do not directly, distinctly, and stedfastly, in their Approaches to God, eye Christ, to offer all their Service through him; nor do come with that humble Boldness and full Assurance of Faith in God as a Father, wherewith the Intercession of Christ warranteth them to come, *Heb. 10. 19, 20, 21, 22.*

4. Not walking as becometh the Gospel of Christ, in Righteousness, Godliness and Sobriety: Many, notwithstanding their Profession of the Gospel, and claiming Interest in Christ and his Grace, yet living loose, prophane, godless, carnal and earthly in their Way; in Effect, turning the Grace of God unto Wantonness and Security, and taking Liberty to sin, because Grace doth abound. And even the best not so constrained with the Love of Christ, to live to him

him who died for them; nor striving to keep the Thoughts of the Love of Christ, and the free Grace of God in him, upon their Hearts, so fresh and constant, as they should be, to keep them watchful, tender, zealous, and enlarged for God, and his Honour.

VI. In Relation to the Operations of the Spirit, wherein the Gospel is the Ministration, and maketh it effectual: As,

1. Prophane Mocking, Miscalling, and Misinterpreting the tender and accurate Walking of the Godly in the Ways of God, as unnecessary and proud Preciseness; and their spiritual Exercises a Fantastickness, Melancholy, or Madness: Which is a horrible Sin, sith to that which is unpardonable, yet, so very frequent amongst carnal and natural People.

2. The meer natural and moral Way of living in a civil Honesty, and sitting down contented therewith, of the most Part of People; not labouring in their Conversation to walk after the Spirit, i. e. upon spiritual Principles, according to the spiritual Rule (of God's revealed Will in his Word) nor for spiritual Ends, the Honour of God, Glory and Immortality.

3. Not observing and yielding unto the Knockings of the Spirit, whereby Christ maketh Tenders to come into Hearts, that he may sup with them and they with him; resisting and quenching his Motions, whereby he stirreth up to Duties; stifling or putting by his Challenges, whether in Publick or Secret, which tend to Repentance, Humiliation or Withdrawing from Sin; not being tender of his Presence and Consolations, to entertain the same, but grieving him, by misprizing them, refusing them, careless Walking, in not attending on his

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Direction and Guiding, in giving Way to known sinful Thoughts, and Lustings in a continued Tract, altho' not growing up to a full Accomplishing of them; and sometimes in giving Way even to grosser Out-breakings, and in not watching against predominant Corruptions, whereof even the best are much guilty.

4. Not delighting in, nor improving spiritual Company and spiritual Exercises.

VII. Of Ministers, in Relation to their Preaching of the Gospel: As,

1. Many not labouring to set forth the Excellency of Christ, in his Person, Offices, and the unsearchable Riches of his Grace, the new Covenant, and the Way of living by Faith in him: Nor making this the main and chief Theme and Matter of their Preaching, as did the Apostle, 1 Cor. 3. 2. 2 Cor. 4. 5. Col. 1. 28. Nor preaching other Things with a Relation to Christ; to wit, Not preaching Convictions, Reproofs, Discoveries of Sin, and of Shortcomings in Duties, and Threatnings, to lead to Christ, to prize him the more highly, and to embrace him the more earnestly, especially for Justification: And pressing Duties in a meer legal Way; not urging them, as by the Authority of God's Commandments; so from the Love of Christ, and the Grace of the Gospel; nor pointing and directing People to their Furniture for them in Christ: Oftentimes craving hard, but giving nothing wherewith to pay.

2. What they preach of Christ, and the Matters of the Gospel, not preaching the same in a Gospel-way: Whereof see 1. Cor. 3. from the Beginning, to Length.

3. Not commending, as they ought, neither their own Work, whether of Meditation or Delivery,

34 *Causes of Being drawn up*
nor their Hearts to Christ, that he might give the
Increase: But going about the Work, either altoge-
ther in their own Strength, or much that Way.

4. Oftentimes not speaking because they believe;
and many not seeking for Communion with Christ,
in their own personal Estate; and to feel the Power
of the Word upon their own Hearts, that they
might speak so.

These Branches of contemning and abusing of the
Gospel, are thought fit, for the better Information of
all, to be held forth at this Time, as being most ob-
vious: Recommending withal to Ministers, to apply
themselves to make a more full and particular Disco-
very thereof; As is not doubted but they will do,
according to their Wisdom and Understanding in
the Gospel, and the Experience they have by Ob-
servation of their own Hearts, and of the Ways and
Consciences of People.

Act and Recommendation of the Synod of
Lothian and Tweeddale, at Edinburgh,
the 9th Day of November, 1654.

THE Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, conside-
ring the continuing Evidences and Effects of
God's Wrath, and his Hand still stretched out against
the Land, do find it their Duty to stir up themselves
and these under their Charge, to accept the Punish-
ment of our Iniquities, and to turn to him that
smites us: And therefore do seriously recommend to
the several Presbyteries within their Bounds, that
from Time to Time, as they shall have Occasion, they
appoint and keep solemn Fasts, for stirring up the
People to be humbled in the Sense of their Iniquities.

by the Commission of Assembly. 35

and to repent for the same; and specially for the Contempt of the glorious Gospel of the Son of GOD, and not employing of him in his Meditation and Offices, for Reconciliation and Amendment: Which, as it is the chief Cause of the LORD's Controversy against us; So, unless this be reformed, we cannot expect that our other Iniquities shall be amended, or that the Lord will turn from the Fierceness of his Anger against us. And albeit this hath been recommended in many former Causes of Humiliation, and particularly insisted on in a printed Paper of the Commission, 1650; Yet there is Cause to fear, that the People do either little understand or lay to Heart the Hainousness of this Sin: And therefore the Synod seriously recommends, that Ministers be the more careful in their Doctrine to lay it out before them. *Extracted.*

As for the Qualifications of Ministers at their Ordination and Admission to Parishes, in the Days of our Covenanted Reformation, in Consequence of, and consistent with these in the Directory for Ordination of Ministers, in our Confession of Faith; see the following

QUERIES put to Mr. James Muir, at his Ordination and Admission to the Kirk of Rethan, by the Presbytery of Deer, in the Shire of Aberdeen, about the Year 1650.

THAT you have used no unlawful Mean for obtaining the Place, by Solicitations or Dealings with any to bring you in thereto, by your self, or any other at your Desire, directly or indirectly.

2. If the End of undertaking be to honour God, and edify Souls.

3. If you have been careful to seek God to go before you in this Business, and have found the Evidence of your Calling thereunto.

4. Engagement to Painfulness, Faithfulness and Impartiality.

5. To stand to Religion in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, as it is in the Word of God, Covenants, Confession of Faith, and Acts of free and lawful General Assemblies of this Church.

6. To submit to your Brethren in the Lord.

7. To walk brotherly, and concur effectually to advance the Power of Godliness, and oppose every Thing contrary thereto.

8. To separate the Precious from the Vile, in Doctrine, Discipline, Sacraments and Conversation; especially to debar from the Communion, all scandalous and erroneous Persons.

9. To disclaim Popery, Prelacy, Episcopacy, Independency, Anabaptism, Antinomianism, Erastianism, and the rest of the Errors of the Time.

10. To be painful in Studying, Preaching, Exhortation, Visiting the Sick, Visiting of Families, and other Ministerial Duties.

11. To countenance and connive at no Man's Sin, for Fear or Favour.

12. To walk exemplary in Conversation, and to be an Example to the Congregation, in Holiness, gravity, &c.

13. To concur with no Persons or Judicatories, for strengthening of the Hands of Evil-doers, or grieving of the Hearts of God's People.

14. To concur, according to your Calling, for purging and keeping Ordinances pure, both as to Members and Office-bearers; and, with Levi, to know neither Father nor Mother, nor any Relation, as to these Things.

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15. Not to content your self with general Doctrine, but to be careful to speak to Consciences in a lively and searching Way.

16. To endeavour to know particularly the Case of your own Flock, that you may know how to apply your self the better to them, in publick and private.

17. To beware of applying Gospel-promises promiscuously, without shewing to whom they belong, lest the Childrens Bread be given to Dogs.

18. To beware of crying down Profession and Strict-walking, under the Name of Hypocrisy and Sectarianism.

19. To endeavour to know the Lord's Working on your own Spirit, that you may know the better how to speak a Word in Season to him that is weary.

20. To loose none from the Censures of the Church, on a bare Confession of the Guilt, without Signs of Repentance.

21. To be careful to choose these of your Congregation who are most fit to rule, and zealous for down-bearing of Sin, to be Helps in Government, without Relation to their Estate in the World.

22. To discountenance and testify against, in publick and in private, all Mockers of Piety.

23. To require Duties of Elders and People.

Unprinted Acts of the General Assembly, at
Glasgow 1638.

Act, That none be chosen as Ruling-Elders, to sit in Presbyteries, Provincial or General Assemblies, but those who subscribe the Covenant, as it is now declared, and acknowledge the Constitutions of this Assembly.

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*Assembly at Aberdeen, August 1. 1640. Sess. 5.
Act for Censuring Speakers against the Covenant.*

THE Assembly ordains, That such as have subscribed the Covenant, and speaks against the same, if he be a Minister, shall be deprived; and if he continue so, being deprived, shall be excommunicate; and if he be any other Man, shall be dealt with as perjured, and satisfied publickly for his Perjury.

*Assembly at Aberdeen, Aug. 5. 1640. Sess. 10.
Act against Expectants refusing to subscribe the Covenant.*

THE Assembly ordains, That if any Expectant shall refuse to subscribe the Covenant, he shall be declared incapable of a Pedagogie, Teaching of a School, Reading at a Kirk, Preaching within a Presbytery; and shall not have Liberty of residing within a Burgh, University, or College: And if they continue obstinate, to be proccessed.

*Assembly at Edinburgh, August 8. 1643. Sess. 6.
Act for Subscribing the Covenant.*

THE General Assembly considering the good and pious Advice of the Commissioners of the last Assembly, upon the 22 of September 1642. post meridiem, recommending to Presbyteries to have Copies of the Covenant, to be subscribed by every Minister at his Admission; doth therefore ratify and approve the same. And further Ordains, that the Covenant be reprinted, with this Ordinance, prefixed thereto; and that every Synod, Presbytery and Parish have one of them bound in Quarto, with some blank Paper, whereupon every Person may be obliged to subscribe; and that the Covenants of the Synod and Presbytery be kept by their Moderators respective, of Universities by their Principals, of Parishes by their Ministers, with all Carefulness; and that particular Account of Obedience to this Act be required hereafter in all Visitations of Parishes, Universities and Presbyteries, and in all Trials of Presbyteries and Synod Books.

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The General Assembly considering, that the Act of the Assembly at Edinburgh 1639, August 30. injoining all Persons to Subscribe the Covenant, under all Ecclesiastical Censure, hath not been obeyed; Therefore Ordains all Ministers to make Intimation of the said Act in their Kirks, and therefore to proceed with the Censures of the Kirk against such as shall refuse to Subscribe the Covenant; and that exact Account be taken of every Minister's Diligence hereintil, by their Presbyteries and Synods, as they will answer to the General Assembly.

Assembly at Edinburgh, Sept. 1. 1647. Sess. ult. Desires and Overtures presented from Presbyteries and Synods, with the Assembly's Answer thereunto.

That all Students of Philosophy, at their Entry, and at their Laureation, be holden to subscribe the League and Covenant, and be urged thereto; and all other Persons as they come to Age and Discretion, before their first receiving of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The Assembly approves this Overture.

Assembly at Edinburgh, August 7. 1648. Sess. 31.

Act for taking the Covenant at the first receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and for the receiving of it also by all Students at their first Entry to Colleges.

THE General Assembly, according to former Recommendations, doth ordain, That all young Students take the Covenant at their first Entry to Colleges; and that hereafter, all Persons whatsoever take the Covenant at their first receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; Requiring hereby Provincial Assemblies, Presbyteries and Universities, to be careful that this Act be observed, and Account thereof taken in the Visitation of Universities and particular Kirks, and in the Trial of Presbyteries.

In